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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/557,196	04/21/2000	Stephen G. Perlman	14531.27.2.2	6989

47973 7590 05/27/2005

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EXAMINER

NGUYEN, CHAU T

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2176

DATE MAILED: 05/27/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/557,196

Applicant(s)

PERLMAN, STEPHEN G.

Examiner

Chau Nguyen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 March 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 03/11/2005 has been entered. Claims 1-20 are presented for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

4. The term "faster than" in claim 20 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "faster than" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurtz, Patent No. 5,574,440, in view of Macrae et al. (Macrae), Patent No. 6,745,391.

7. As to claims 1, 5, 6, 8-9, and 11-12, Kurtz discloses in a home entertainment system including a central device coupled to a plurality of electronics devices, wherein the plurality of electronics devices includes a display device and a descrambler, and wherein the central device manages the operation of the plurality of electronics devices, a method for tuning channels that are requested by a user for display on the display device, the method comprising the steps for:

receiving user input at the central device, wherein the user input selects a channel that corresponds to a signal carrying programming, and wherein the signal is received by the entertainment system (Abstract, col. 1, line 11 – col. 2, line 7, col. 3, lines 15-39, and Fig. 1: switching apparatus 10 (the central device) is employed with an

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entertainment installation having a cable signal passing through a cable convert box (descrambler), and user can use a remote control to select a channel);

determining at the central device whether the signal is scrambled or non-scrambled, wherein both the scrambled and the non-scrambled signals have to be tuned before being displayed (Abstract, col. 2, line 37 – col. 3, line 11, col. 4, line 47 – col. 5, line 21 and Fig. 1: the central device has green and red light emitting diodes (LEDs) which indicate the signal is scrambled (premium) or non-scrambled (non premium), either scrambled or non-scrambled signal must be tuned before being displayed, they have to be tuned either by set top box, television, or any device and therefore signals must be tuned before being displayed is an inherent feature at the central device);

if the signal is determined to be scrambled, performing the steps for:

routing the scrambled signal from the central device to the descrambler (col. 3, line 40 – col. 4, line 12, col. 4, line 47 – col. 6, line 18, and Fig. 1 &

Fig. 2: the premium signal is output to a converter box (descrambler)); and

using the descrambler to descramble and tune to one or more channels of the scrambled signal for display on the device (col. 3, line 40 – col. 4, line 12, col. 4, line 47 – col. 6, line 18, and Fig. 1 & Fig. 2: the output of a cable converter box suited for a cable ready TV tuning system); and

if the signal is determined to be non scrambled, performing the step for:

using an internal tuner at the central device to tune to one or more channels of the non-scrambled signal for display on the display device, and such

that the non-scrambled signal can be displayed (col. 3, line 40 – col. 4, line 12, col. 4, line 47 – col. 6, line 18, and Fig. 1 & Fig. 2: where the signal source selected is a non-premium (non-scramble) channel input, the viewer is provided the use of all the various built-in programming (tuner) and television receiver).

However, Kurt does not explicitly disclose using the electronic programming guide data stored at the central device to determine whether the signal is scrambled or non-scrambled. Macrae discloses peripheral devices located within receiving locations (central devices) fro receiving data stream, and the data stream includes electronic programming guide (EPG), and software applications located within the peripheral devices determine whether a program is scrambled or unscrambled (col. 1, lines 54-57, col. 3, lines 12-32 and col. 11, lines 10-34). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of Macrae and Kurt to include using the electronic programming guide data stored at the central device to determine whether the signal is scrambled or non-scrambled in turn notify the user that such the signal is available or unavailable for selection.

8. As to claims 2, 7 and 14, Kurtz and Macrae (Kurtz-Macrae) disclose after descrambling and tuning the scrambled signal at the descrambler, performing the step for sending the descrambled and tuned signal from the descrambler to the central device (Kurtz, col. 10, line 3 – col. 11, line 5).

9. As to claims 3 and 13, Kurtz-Macrae disclose wherein the descrambler is a cable box (Kurtz, col. 5, lines 53-67).

10. As to claims 4 and 10, Kurtz-Macrae disclose wherein the user input is sent to the entertainment system by a remote control device (Kurt, col. 4, lines 47 – col. 5, line 21).

11. As to claims 15-16, Kurtz-Macrae disclose wherein receiving the signal by the entertainment system comprises receiving the signal at a single input of the central device, such that whether the signal is determined to be scramble or non-scrambled, the signal is received at the single input of the central device (Kurtz, col. 3, line 40 – col. 4, line 12 and col. 5, lines 22-52: an entertainment having a cable signal passing through a cable converter box and which provides both premium and non-premium programming, the connector 23 is labeled “TO CABLE” which is the connection for the input signal of the cable).

12. As to claim 17, Kurtz-Macrae disclose an input over which both the scramble and non-scrambled signals are received (Kurtz, col. 3, line 40 – col. 4, line 12).

13. As to claims 18-19, Kurtz-Macrae wherein the routing is automatically performed upon determining from the electronic programming guide data that the signal is scrambled, and wherein the signal is automatically tuned by the internal tuner upon

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determining with the electronic programming guide that the signal is non-scrambled (Kurtz, col. 3, line 40 – col. 4, line 12, col. 4, line 47 – col. 6, line 18, and Fig. 1 & Fig. 2: the premium signal is output to a converter box (descrambler); Macrae discloses peripheral devices located within receiving locations (central devices) for receiving data stream, and the data stream includes electronic programming guide (EPG), and software applications located within the peripheral devices determine whether a program is scrambled or unscrambled (col. 1, lines 54-57, col. 3, lines 12-32 and col. 11, lines 10-34). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of Macrae and Kurt to include using the electronic programming guide data stored at the central device to determine whether the signal is scrambled or non-scrambled in turn notify the user that such the signal is available or unavailable for selection).

14. Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurtz, Macrae et al. (Macrae) as discussed in claims 1-19 above, and further in view of Pauley et al. (Pauley), US Patent No. 6,188,448.

15. As to claim 20, Kurtz and Macrae disclose the claimed invention as discussed in claims 1-19. However, Kurt and Macrae do not explicitly disclose wherein the internal tuner of the central device is faster than a tuner of the descrambler that is used to tune the scrambled signals upon being descrambled. Pauley discloses television systems having two tuners, wherein one tuner is connected to a cable box and is under control of

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the television, and another tuner is connected other than through a cable box, and the speed of channel changing on the cable box (descrambler) is slower than tuning via the tuner adapted for connection to the bare cable (Abstract and col. 1, lines 5-12). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Pauley and Kurtz and Macrae to include wherein the internal tuner of the central device is faster than a tuner of the descrambler that is used to tune the scrambled signals upon being descrambled. Pauley's system having a two tuner system, which may be controlled by a single remote, seeks to remedy the disadvantage of slow tuning via cable box (descrambler).

Response to Arguments

In the remarks, Applicants argue in substance that

(A) Prior art fails to teach or disclose a system or method for actually "determining from electronic programming guide data stored at the central device to determine whether the signal is scrambled or non-scrambled". (see page 8 of remarks).

As to point (A), Kurtz discloses in the abstract and col. 2, line 37 – col. 3, line 11, col. 4, line 47 – col. 5, line 21 and Fig. 1: an entertainment or a central device having a cable signal passing through a cable converter box and which provides both premium and non-premium programming, a two-way splitter supplies the signal to that converter

box to establish one source as a non-premium channel input and a second source as the output (represents a “descrambled” version) of the converter box; the central device has green and red light emitting diodes (LEDs) which indicate the signal is scrambled (premium) or non-scrambled (non premium). However, Kurt does not explicitly disclose using the electronic programming guide data stored at the central device to determine whether the signal is scrambled or non-scrambled. Macrae discloses peripheral devices located within receiving locations (central devices) fro receiving data stream, and the data stream includes electronic programming guide (EPG), and software applications located within the peripheral devices determine whether a program is scrambled or unscrambled (col. 1, lines 54-57, col. 3, lines 12-32 and col. 11, lines 10-34). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of Macrae and Kurt to include using the electronic programming guide data stored at the central device to determine whether the signal is scrambled or non-scrambled in turn notify the user that such the signal is available or unavailable for selection.

(B) Prior art fails to teach that tuners located at the central device are used for performing the tuning the non-scrambled signals.

As to point B, Kurtz discloses in Abstract, col. 2, line 37 – col. 3, line 11, col. 4, line 47 – col. 5, line 21 and Fig. 1: the central device has green and red light emitting diodes (LEDs) which indicate the signal is scrambled (premium) or non-scrambled (non

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premium), either scrambled or non-scrambled signal must be tuned before being displayed, they have to be tuned either by set top box, television, or any device and therefore signals must be tuned before being displayed is an inherent feature at the central device.

(C) Prior art fails to teach or show any system or method in which the EPG data is used to determine whether a signal is scrambled or not.

As to point C, EPG data is a graphical user interface displaying or showing data, therefore, EPG data itself cannot determine whether a signal is scrambled or not. Instead, there must be some kind of software program at the central device to make such determination. Kurtz discloses in abstract, col. 2, line 37 – col. 3, line 11, col. 4, line 47 – col. 5, line 21 and Fig. 1: the central device has green and red light emitting diodes (LEDs) which indicate the signal is scrambled (premium) or non-scrambled (non premium). However, Kurt does not explicitly disclose using the electronic programming guide data stored at the central device to determine whether the signal is scrambled or non-scrambled. Macrae discloses peripheral devices located within receiving locations (central devices) for receiving data stream, and the data stream includes electronic programming guide (EPG), and software applications located within the peripheral devices determine whether a program is scrambled or unscrambled (col. 1, lines 54-57, col. 3, lines 12-32 and col. 11, lines 10-34). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of

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Macrae and Kurt to include using the electronic programming guide data stored at the central device to determine whether the signal is scrambled or non-scrambled in turn notify the user that such the signal is available or unavailable for selection.

16. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-20 have been considered but are not persuasive. Please see the rejection and response to arguments above.


Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Chau Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272-4092. The Examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the Examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's supervisor, Joseph Feild, can be reached at (571) 272-4090.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Chau Nguyen
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 2176


JOSEPH FEILD
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER